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**Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing
of the United Nations peacekeeping operations**

Preliminary report on the status of implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations, requested the Secretary-General to submit a preliminary report on the status of the implementation of the resolution.

The present report reviews the progress made in the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including the establishment of the Department of Field Support, and the impact of initial achievements. It also highlights other recent developments in United Nations peacekeeping and ongoing challenges in the mounting, managing and sustaining of peacekeeping operations, and their implications for the restructuring process.

Action to be taken by the General Assembly is set out in section IX of the present report.





I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/279 on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peacekeeping operations, reaffirmed its support for further reforms within the Secretariat to improve its capacity at Headquarters to plan, deploy, manage and sustain United Nations peacekeeping operations. Central to those reforms was the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including the establishment of a Department of Field Support.
2. In paragraph 66 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit, during the second part of its resumed sixty-second session, a preliminary report on the status of the implementation of the resolution, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to strengthen the management structures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (A/61/743).
3. The present report outlines the preliminary progress made in the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of the Department of Field Support and addresses other requests made in resolution 61/279. It also highlights other recent developments in United Nations peacekeeping and ongoing challenges in the mounting, managing and sustaining of peacekeeping operations, and their implications for the restructuring process.
4. Pursuant to the request made in paragraph 44 of the resolution, a comprehensive report on the results of the ongoing examination and rationalization of the investigation caseload and the overall review of the capacity of the Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services was submitted to the General Assembly (A/62/582) and is before the Assembly for its consideration. Accordingly, the present report does not address issues covered in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening investigations.
5. As requested by the Assembly in its resolution 61/279, a comprehensive report on the restructuring process and on the impact of past reforms of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in support of the implementation of mission mandates and on managing peacekeeping operations will be submitted to the General Assembly during the second part of its resumed sixty-third session.

II. Context for the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations

6. Since 2003, there has been a sustained surge in the demand for United Nations peacekeeping. With 13 operations newly established or significantly expanded since 2003, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations currently manages 20 field missions worldwide which currently comprise more than 140,000 military, police and civilian personnel. The Department of Field Support provides administrative and logistical support to an additional 16 field-based presences.
7. The exponential growth in United Nations peacekeeping has been accompanied by increased complexity in its operations. Multifarious mandates have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of multidimensional and integrated missions and in a much broader scope of substantive responsibilities. At the same

time, the pursuit of more collective responses to threats to international peace and security and peacebuilding efforts have led to substantial growth in the number of peacekeeping partnerships, both with regional and multilateral peacekeeping forces and with humanitarian and development actors. Given the diverse range of those partnerships and the degree of partner engagement in peacekeeping-related activities, an exceptional degree of coordination and collaboration has been required. In addition, United Nations peace missions now operate more frequently in higher-threat environments, where ceasefires and peace processes are fragile and where crises are more likely to occur. New approaches to peacekeeping have therefore been necessary, requiring more extensive planning, new capabilities and increased guidance and oversight. Such higher-risk environments have also necessitated additional security measures, compounding the complexity of operations. The growing number of deployments to countries with weak or degraded infrastructure has created additional challenges in the areas of administrative and logistical support.

8. In view of those trends, and on the basis of extensive consultations with Member States, the Secretary-General submitted an initial proposal to the General Assembly indicating the intention to pursue further significant reforms in the structure and organization of the Secretariat in the area of the direction and support of peacekeeping operations (A/61/749). In its resolution 61/256, on strengthening the capacity of the Organization in peacekeeping operations, the General Assembly supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to restructure the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, including the establishment of a Department of Field Support. In response to the request by the Assembly, a more comprehensive report was submitted (A/61/858 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2), that elaborated on those proposals, taking into consideration the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the management structures of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (A/61/743).

9. The reform proposals combined a series of measures, including structural change to respond to the scope and magnitude of field missions; the redistribution of functions and resources across departments in alignment with the proposed rationalization of roles and responsibilities between the new Department of Field Support and the Department of Management; the creation of new capacities to reflect the increased complexity of the mandated activities of field missions; and the significant strengthening of capacities at the leadership, senior management and working levels to meet the surge in demand for peacekeeping.

III. Outcome of General Assembly deliberations on the restructuring proposal during its sixty-first session

10. In its resolution 61/279, the General Assembly approved the principal proposals to restructure the Department of Peacekeeping Operations into two Departments, with the establishment of a new Department of Field Support; create the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, integrating police, judicial, corrections, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, mine action and security sector reform structures; reconfigure the Africa Division in the Office of Operations into two divisions; establish integrated operational teams comprising political officers and military, police and support specialists within the regional

divisions of the Office of Operations; and create a Policy, Evaluation and Training Division.

11. The General Assembly also approved the creation of new capacities, including a Public Affairs Unit in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General; an integrated mission planning cell in the Office of Operations; security sector reform capacity in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions; and evaluation and partnership capacities in the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division.

12. In addition, the General Assembly supported the strengthening of senior management. It approved the creation of the post of Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the upgrading of the Military Adviser position to the level of Assistant Secretary-General to head the Office of Military Affairs, and the creation of the posts of Chief of Staff, Director for Policy, Evaluation and Training, and a second Director for the Africa II Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Assembly also approved the creation of the posts of Under-Secretary-General for Field Support and of Directors for the upgraded Field Personnel Division and Field Budget and Finance Division within the Department of Field Support. Capacity was also strengthened at the working level in most areas of both Departments.

13. With regard to the redistribution of responsibilities, the power to delegate additional authority was given to the Field Personnel Division by the Department of Management to make discretionary decisions with respect to job classifications of field positions up to and including the D-1 level, approval for the movement of staff to higher levels, and discretionary decision-making in the management of staff and the administration of benefits.

14. Certain key proposals were not supported by the General Assembly, inter alia, 17 of the 42 requests for specialist officer posts for the integrated operational teams, including one post at the principal officer level; the creation of a risk management capacity within the Department of Field Support, pending submission of the proposals by the Secretary-General regarding the application of risk management Organization-wide; the establishment of an Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Field Administrative Support; the upgrading of the Communications and Information Technology Service to a division, headed by a Director, pending the appointment of a Chief Information Technology Officer; and the establishment of the Field Procurement Service, with increased delegation of authority for field procurement, pending the submission to and consideration by the Assembly of the report of the Secretary-General on procurement reform, pursuant to its resolution 61/246.

IV. Status of implementation of the reform process

A. Progress in restructuring

15. Since the approval of the reform proposals by the General Assembly in June 2007, the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of the Department of Field Support have been central to the United Nations peacekeeping agenda. The restructuring process has been a particular challenge, however, given the need to ensure continuity in the provision of full

support to the 20 United Nations field missions and in planning for future operations. That has included the launching of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the largest and most challenging peacekeeping operation the United Nations has undertaken to date, and the planning and subsequent deployment of another unique and highly complex operation, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), with the support of the European Union. As experience has shown that reforms directed at longer-term institutional development cannot be deferred if the Organization is to prepare for and adapt to the dynamic evolution in United Nations peacekeeping, the restructuring effort is taking place concurrently with the continued implementation of reforms in the areas of doctrine, personnel, partnerships, organization and resources, as set out in the medium-term reform plan of both Departments, referred to as "Peace operations 2010".

16. The reform agenda for United Nations peacekeeping has been shaped by a number of key commitments. There has been an urgent need for greater focus on strategic issues related to mission planning and mandate implementation and for more effective coordination and integration in cross-cutting areas of activity, such as mission planning, deployment, management and support, as well as crisis response. In order to increase the impact of peacekeeping, mission start-up capabilities need to be strengthened in certain areas, such as policing, and greater coherence must be achieved in others, including the Organization's support for the provision of security, the rule of law and sustainable security institutions. There is also a need to more effectively harness the range of capacities that can be brought to bear in peacekeeping and post-conflict environments.

17. With regard more specifically to support issues, the reforms proposed have been guided by the commitment to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of field support, strengthen the management and oversight of peacekeeping resources, ensure the effective management of the increased delegation of authority to the field, and better leverage information and communications technology so as to address the strategic information requirements of United Nations peacekeeping. They have also been driven by the need to better identify and recruit qualified and diverse leaders for peacekeeping operations and to ensure the highest standards of conduct and discipline, as expected of United Nations peacekeepers.

18. Following the approval by the General Assembly of the resources associated with the reform proposals in June 2007, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support undertook to complete the restructuring process, comprising preparation, implementation and consolidation phases, within 12 months (see table 1). At the time of writing, the Secretariat was more than halfway through the process.

Table 1
Timetable for the implementation of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of the Department of Field Support

	July-December 2007 Preparation	January-June 2008 Implementation	June 2008 onwards Consolidation
Recruitment	X		
Establishment of new structures and capacities in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support		X	
Establishment of integrated operational teams and other new structures		X	
Assumption of increased delegation of responsibilities from the Department of Management	X		
Development of harmonized business processes and standard operating procedures	X		
Introduction of revised business processes and information management/information technology solutions to support the new structures/integrated operational teams		X	
Training	X		
Continued training and business process enhancements			X
Evaluation of implementation			X
Space planning	X		

19. Implementation of the restructuring process has been guided by four overarching principles. The first is to give continued priority to the field missions — the *raison d'être* of the two Departments. The second is to ensure unity of command within United Nations peacekeeping, both in the field and at Headquarters, to promote unity of effort in pursuit of common goals. The third is to maintain a simplicity of approach, with a focus on objectives, real needs, clear communication and results. The fourth is to ensure transparency and inclusiveness, so as to facilitate decision-making and accountability as well as the engagement of all stakeholders in the process.

20. The implementation plan for the restructuring process focuses on the following priority areas, as detailed below: (a) recruitment and senior appointments; (b) the establishment of integrated and common structures, policies and processes for the activities of both Departments; (c) information management and information technology support; (d) outreach and the dissemination of information to all stakeholders on the restructuring objectives, process and implications; (e) the development and conduct of training programmes for integrated operational teams; (f) the development and implementation of evaluation mechanisms; and (g) office space and co-location.

B. Recruitment and senior appointments

21. As a core element of the restructuring process recruitment for the additional 152 positions authorized by the General Assembly has been a management priority. Within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, appointments have been made for the new post of Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions and the Chief of Staff at the Director level. In addition, the recruitment of the Military Adviser at the Assistant Secretary-General level, the two Directors of the Africa Divisions in the Office of Operations and of the Director of the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division is ongoing and should be completed by the end of March 2008. In the Department of Field Support, the Under-Secretary-General and the Directors of the Field Personnel Division and the Field Budget and Finance Division have been appointed.

22. Recruitment for all newly approved positions was carried out in accordance with established procedures and requirements. That included the classification of posts and the approval by central review bodies of all vacancy announcements prior to their posting. Vacancy announcements for civilian professional positions were circulated for the required 60 days, and the full 60-day lists were used to consider a wider pool of candidates. In the case of seconded military and police positions, the vacancy announcements were circulated to Member States for 90 days.

23. In accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, the primary consideration in the evaluation of cases was the identification of the most suitable candidates in terms of efficiency, competence and integrity, with due regard to geographic diversity. In addition, in accordance with legislative mandates, consideration was also given to ensuring proper representation of troop contributors in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, to achieve the goal of gender parity and to take account of the merits of qualified serving staff members. At present, 96 of 119 troop-contributing countries are represented in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

24. While the selection process for a number of posts is still ongoing, recruitment has been completed for the majority of the new positions. As at the end of February 2008, recruitment procedures had been completed for 69 positions. Recommendations for selection had been submitted to the central review bodies or the Senior Review Group of the Secretariat for another 26 positions. Recruitment is ongoing for 56 positions. In certain cases, delays have been experienced owing to the need to appoint the heads of organizational units prior to the selection of key positions in their areas. Given the number of positions involved, that recruitment exercise was time-consuming and represented a significant workload for the offices concerned, including for the Office of Human Resources Management and the central review bodies.

C. Establishment of integrated and common structures, policies and processes

25. In view of the shared goals and interlinked mandates of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, it is essential that they function in a coherent and integrated way at all levels of activity. The creation

of integrated and common structures, policies and processes for the activities of the two Departments have consequently been another core element of the restructuring effort, as outlined below.

Unity of command

26. In accordance with the commitment of the Secretary-General to guarantee unity of command in the field and at Headquarters, unity of command and further integration in the field have been strengthened through the delegation of overall authority to the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and heads of mission for all mission components, including the military, police and administration. Heads of mission support in field missions continue to exercise administrative authority delegated from the Department of Management in support of programme activities under the overall direction of the head of mission. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General will continue to report to the Secretary-General through the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. At the Headquarters level, unity of command has been achieved through arrangements by which the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support reports to and receives direction from the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on all issues that relate to United Nations peacekeeping. In both cases, unity of command ensures the alignment of operational priorities and the effective coordination and integration of efforts.

Joint senior-level strategic, policy and operational forums

27. Joint senior-level forums have been established to address cross-cutting strategic, policy, operational and crisis or emergency issues. The senior management team, expanded senior management team and the Directors' meetings, held weekly, collectively provide an opportunity for information-sharing and decision-making. Weekly joint town hall meetings also contribute to organizational coherence and unity of effort.

Integrated operational teams

28. The integrated operational teams constitute the primary structure for integration between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in the daily planning, direction, management and support of peacekeeping operations. They also serve as the principal entry point at Headquarters for Member States and troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as for United Nations and external partners. With 25 of the 42 specialist posts having been approved for the integrated operational teams, and an additional 12 specialist posts approved for the teams in support of UNAMID, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and MINURCAT for the 2007/08 period, six of the seven teams proposed have been created within the regional divisions of the Office of Operations. The composition of the teams is based on two models: one comprising dedicated teams of political, military, police and support specialists, as is the case with the two Africa Divisions and the Europe and Latin America Division, and the other comprising two sub-teams of political specialists, which share the police, military and support specialists, as is the case with the Asia and Middle East Division. The second model has been made possible in large part as a result of the dedicated military capacity in the Strategic Military Cell provided to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. In both cases, thematic advisers, for

example in the judicial; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and gender areas will support or participate in the integrated operational teams when necessary.

29. Owing to the unprecedented scale, complexity and start-up demands for UNAMID, the integrated operational team for Darfur was established early, in October 2007, to ensure the effective integration of efforts during the deployment of the mission. The standing up of the remaining five integrated operational teams is expected to be completed by the end of May 2008, by which time the recruitment of military, police and support specialists is scheduled to be finalized. Terms of reference for the integrated operational teams and for the team leaders have been approved by the senior management of both Departments, with a view to clarifying their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the functional areas of the two Departments. In order to ensure coherence and consistency in unity of command, team leaders serve as first reporting officers, and the regional directors act as second reporting officers for the military, police and support specialists within the teams. Managers in the associated functional structures serve as additional reporting officers.

30. To facilitate the integration of efforts and efficiencies within the integrated operational teams, support in the areas of guidance, training, information management and business process improvement has been necessary. Initial emphasis has been placed on training in teambuilding, aspects of leadership in an integrated context, and further clarifying the division of labour within the teams and between the teams and the functional units. A real-time lessons-learned exercise conducted by the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division during the start-up phase of the integrated operational team for Darfur has helped to identify areas in which integrated operational teams will need critical support prior to and during their establishment. The exercise also served to identify good practices and lessons learned, which are being reflected in guidance and training materials under development. These include a handbook and a job-specific induction programme for integrated operational teams, which are being designed to ensure a common understanding of the objectives, functions and working methods of integrated operational teams; strengthen core skills in areas such as drafting, reporting, coordination, monitoring and analysis; and foster strong team dynamics. Lessons learned from the integrated operational team for Darfur are also informing the development of guidance on standard operating procedures related to core business processes and information management. The potential of the integrated operational teams has been evident in the case of the Darfur team, which has proved to be a more effective, efficient and responsive mechanism for strategic guidance and management support for UNAMID than previous arrangements.

Shared resources

31. Integration of effort, organizational coherence and efficiency are also being achieved through various shared resources. The Chief of Staff in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations is responsible for issues related to restructuring and integration. The Policy, Evaluation and Training Division is leading or coordinating policy development, common doctrine, best practices, evaluation, training and the strengthening of strategic partnerships for both departments and field missions. The Public Affairs Unit and the Situation Centre in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are supporting both Departments in the delivery of integrated communications and responses in support of field missions. The Situation

Centre acts as an information hub for peacekeeping operations and facilitates Headquarters crisis response.

32. The Executive Office serves both Departments, facilitating the preparation and management of interlinked budgets, managing and administering integrated, shared or interlinked structures, facilitating the implementation of human resources action plans for both Departments and managing other cross-cutting issues. In addition, the Senior Leadership Appointments Section supports both Departments, as does the Conduct and Discipline Unit on matters related to the promotion of conduct and discipline standards and appropriate follow-up on conduct cases. The Office of the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support also coordinates and monitors audit-related activities for both Departments.

Policies and business processes

33. The effective and efficient functioning of integrated peacekeeping structures rests, inter alia, on the timely production and dissemination of guidance and processes aimed at supporting the integrated functions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. Progress is being made on the development of a common doctrine and common policies and business processes for the two Departments. A core doctrinal document entitled "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines", which provides a comprehensive overview of the essential concepts and lessons learned that guide the planning and conduct of modern United Nations peacekeeping operations, was completed in January 2008 following extensive consultations, including with Member States. Progress has also been made with United Nations system partners in the integrated mission planning process through operational guidance notes, scheduled to be completed by March 2008, which translate planning policy into standard practice.

34. New or updated guidance on other issues has been developed or is under development on diverse topics ranging from joint mission analysis centres and contract management to quick-impact projects, as well as guidance for mission start-ups. In accordance with the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/61/743, para. 83), the Secretary-General's bulletin on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (ST/SGB/2000/9) is under revision and the bulletin on the Department of Field Support is being prepared to ensure that they clearly reflect the evolution and the new roles and responsibilities of the two Departments. A methodology is also currently being finalized to assist with the internal prioritization of guidance development for both Departments. Similarly, a needs assessment for business process improvement is in progress and is scheduled to be completed in March 2008. In the meantime, priority will be given to the processes identified that relate to integrated structures and those that most directly affect field missions. In accordance with the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/61/743, para. 85), due attention will be given to accountability structures, internal delegations of authority and the appropriate levels of integration between entities involved in cross-cutting business processes.

D. Information management and information technology support

35. Information management and technology have played, and will continue to play, an instrumental role in the coordination, coherence and efficiency of business processes. During the preliminary phase of restructuring, information and communications policies, standard operating procedures and routing systems were revised to reflect the establishment of the Department of Field Support, including in the areas of correspondence and records management. The United Nations website and peace operations Intranet were also revised to reflect the establishment of the Department of Field Support and the additional restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Collaboration tools for the integrated operational teams have been identified and deployed to the integrated operational team for Darfur and are being progressively provided to the other integrated operational teams. To provide both Departments and field missions with access to the same peacekeeping information and research tools, a peacekeeping resource package of online databases has been deployed through the peace operations Intranet.

E. Outreach and information

36. In order to ensure the awareness of all stakeholders of the most recent reform efforts and their effective participation or support, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have engaged in a series of outreach and public-information activities with primary stakeholders, including staff members from both Departments and from field missions, in addition to internal and external partners. Regular joint town hall meetings have been held with staff members on the restructuring process. Briefings were also provided to heads of mission in October 2007 on the reform and restructuring processes, and they were subsequently apprised of further developments and their implications for field operations. Senior leadership training and induction courses include briefings on the reform process. Information concerning the reform effort is also available on the shared Intranet and website. Outreach activities with partners including the Department of Safety and Security, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund have also been organized to explain the objectives and implications of the restructuring process and the mandates of new structures and to explore potential or increased cooperation.

F. Development and conduct of training programmes

37. In line with the goals and principles of the reform processes that are under way, the Integrated Training Service in the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division is revising its strategy. Priorities during the preliminary phase of restructuring have included leadership training to better prepare mission leadership and senior management for their assignments. That has involved the further development of standardized training materials and the conduct of training courses for mission leadership and senior management through the senior mission leaders course and the senior leadership induction programme, which have been provided to 72 and 29 mission leaders and members of senior management, respectively, during the past

year. In addition to leadership training, a computer-based senior mission administration and resources training programme is currently being developed; the first pilot course was held in February 2008. Since early 2007, new civilian peacekeeping personnel have undergone mandatory civilian pre-deployment induction training at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy. In addition to delivering and developing training courses, the Integrated Training Service is undertaking a comprehensive needs assessment of field and Headquarters training needs, which will inform the implementation of the peacekeeping training strategy during the period from 2008 to 2010.

G. Development and implementation of evaluation mechanisms

38. While the newly established evaluation capacity is still in the nascent stage, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support are jointly developing an evaluation mechanism with key performance indicators. The supporting system, which is expected to be operational by June 2008, will allow United Nations Headquarters to have real-time access to information and indicators on a broad range of operational activities. In addition, three evaluations are scheduled for completion by 30 June 2008. Furthermore, a draft mission evaluation policy has been developed, and other guidance material for evaluations is under revision.

H. Accommodation and co-location of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support

39. In the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to manage and sustain peace operations (A/61/858 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2) the dispersion of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as a result of its expansion over the past 10 years was highlighted, as was the resulting considerable impediment to the coordination and integration of the daily activities of the Department in supporting field missions. To facilitate integration efforts, office space has been reassigned internally within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. The co-location of senior management was completed in 2007, and high priority is now being accorded to the co-location of integrated operational teams, which should be completed by March 2008. However, in many cases, co-location is being achieved through the doubling up of Professional staff in existing offices or by their placement at workstations. New staff members are being accommodated in additional rented office space.

40. While these solutions have addressed immediate space needs, they have resulted in the further geographical dispersion of the Departments. The situation has been exacerbated by the requirement to accommodate planning and mission start-up support teams in support of the implementation of Security Council mandates for Darfur as well as Chad and the Central African Republic. Consultations within the Secretariat are ongoing with a view to identifying long-term solutions to the space requirements of both Departments within the constraints of the capital master plan. Additional resources may be required to adapt facilities to the requirements of both Departments.

V. Progress in the establishment of newly created structures

41. While the implementation phase of the restructuring process was scheduled to begin on 1 January 2008 following the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the establishment of the Department of Field Support and approval for the creation of the new capacities, both Departments have been committed to the achievement of early results. That has been accomplished through the reorientation of existing capacities, the temporary reallocation of resources and the prioritization of recruitment processes.

A. Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations

42. The Chief of Staff position, which was established with the primary responsibility of overseeing the internal management of the Department on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General, was filled in October 2007. A considerable part of that responsibility is to ensure the effective integration of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support at all levels of activity, as well as leading and overseeing the development and implementation of the Department's reform and change management plans. The Chief of Staff directs the overall implementation of the restructuring process, in collaboration with the Director of the Department of Field Support. The Chief of Staff has given priority attention to the recruitment of candidates for senior posts, all of which are expected to be filled during the first quarter of 2008; the establishment and effective functioning of the integrated operational teams; and the revision of policies, procedures and work processes.

43. As part of the Chief of Staff's broader responsibilities, a programme management plan is under development to ensure the effective monitoring and prioritized delivery of departmental commitments, including results-based budget frameworks. The plan, which takes into consideration the recommendation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/61/743, para. 101) regarding the need to strengthen the monitoring of the work of the Department, is due to be finalized in March 2008. Following the creation of an information management capacity on 1 January 2008, the Chief of Staff has been able to assume broader information management responsibilities, including the reconvening of the Information Management Committee in February 2008, with a composition revised to reflect the principal units of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. In addition, an implementation plan for the joint information management strategy for the Departments has been developed which will ensure the effective coordination and coherence of activities in this area, including the development and prioritization of related budget proposals.

B. Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions

44. The Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions was established in July 2007, and the Assistant Secretary-General of the Office assumed his functions in September 2007. With the consolidation of existing police, justice, corrections, mine action, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration structures, and the

establishment of new security sector reform capacity, the Office has been actively implementing its mandate to provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to the provision of United Nations assistance in the area of security and the rule of law. Owing to the special nature of police functions in United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Police Adviser continues to be a member of the senior management team and has direct access to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, as required. While the Office provides support primarily to United Nations peacekeeping operations, it has broader responsibilities within the United Nations system in certain areas, such as police, corrections, mine action and security sector reform.

45. In the context of support for United Nations peacekeeping operations, a priority task has been the provision of strategic advice and guidance to the integrated operational teams and to counterparts of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions in missions. In that regard, measures have been taken to ensure closer and more systematic collaboration, including in the preparation of mandate reviews by the Security Council and the preparation of budget proposals and reports of the Secretary-General, to ensure that the political, financial and material requirements of missions in supporting those activities are clearly set out, so as to enable Member States to take informed decisions.

46. Other priority initiatives include the development of a strategy for the Office that integrates approaches and activities across the criminal justice spectrum and develops synergies among disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform and mine action components; the development of a holistic and coherent approach to security sector reform within the United Nations system, in collaboration with United Nations partners, as presented in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Securing peace and development: the role of United Nations in supporting security sector reform" (A/62/659-S/2008/39); the enhancement of working relationships with field operations through the establishment of regular reporting procedures; the conduct of a preliminary inventory of all projects relating to the rule of law and security planned and implemented by the United Nations and its partners, with a view to strengthening strategic planning and better addressing critical gaps at the programmatic level; and the institution of mission planning meetings within the Office to ensure the synchronization of strategies and plans. That has led to the provision of integrated strategic guidance and support to field missions, in addition to joint mission assessments and evaluations.

C. Policy, Evaluation and Training Division

47. The Policy, Evaluation and Training Division was established in July 2007 with the consolidation of the existing Peacekeeping Best Practices Section and the Integrated Training Service and the establishment of new capacities for evaluation and partnerships. It provides an integrated capacity for the development and dissemination of doctrine for United Nations peacekeeping operations, which is informed by the systematic capturing of best practices and lessons learned, the development and provision of training based on doctrine and the evaluation of mission performance in implementing mandates, and the management of strategic peacekeeping partnerships.

48. In addition to the activities previously highlighted in paragraph 37 above, the recently established evaluation capacity will revise or develop guidance policies, procedures and tools for the conduct of self-evaluation to support the identification of areas for improvement, such as mandate implementation, operational activities or business processes, policies, management, training, performance and structures, and of areas in which cross-cutting remedial action needs to be taken. Evaluations of mission performance and of cross-cutting functions across missions will also be undertaken.

D. Partnerships

49. The partnerships capacity was created in November 2007. Building on the work undertaken by the Peace operations 2010 reform task force in reviewing key internal peacekeeping partnerships, it is developing a two-year strategic plan that focuses on priority partnerships with (a) regional organizations, in particular the European Union, the African Union and African subregional organizations, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; (b) United Nations and external development partners, particularly the United Nations Development Programme, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the World Bank; and (c) humanitarian and human rights partners, especially the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

50. With regard to regional organizations, attention will be given to building on the cooperation frameworks already in place with the African Union and the European Union through the elaboration of tools that are essential to implementing United Nations cooperation commitments. Such tools will include detailed arrangements for operational cooperation in mission-specific as well as functional areas, effective liaison arrangements for joint assessment and programmatic and evaluation activities, as well as joint support frameworks in logistics, and, where appropriate, procurement. Partnerships with humanitarian and development actors will focus on the development of strategic frameworks that set out institutional arrangements, including identified areas of common interest, roles and responsibilities, and modalities for regular communication, building on existing coordination processes, in particular the integrated mission planning process and system-wide coordination mechanisms such as the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Rule of Law Resource and Coordination Group. Progress is already under way on the negotiation of a strategic framework agreement on United Nations-World Bank cooperation in a crisis context, which will serve as the basis for the implementation of more comprehensive joint operational initiatives, building on those initiated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Liberia.

E. Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Field Support

51. The Office of the Under-Secretary-General was established with the responsibility of ensuring the strategic direction, management and coordination of all support provided to United Nations field operations. In that context, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and the senior leadership of the Department have been actively vested in improving dialogue and increasing interaction with Member

States and troop- and police-contributing countries to increase awareness of support functions as strategic enablers for the successful mounting and sustainment of United Nations field operations.

52. The Officer-in-Charge of the Department provides regular briefings to the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General and attends Management Committee meetings, which has resulted in a greater awareness in the decision-making process of mission support needs. The Officer-in-Charge is also working closely with the Department of Management and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to coordinate priority management issues with implications for field operations, such as human resources management and procurement reform, and the strengthening of the role of information and communications technology in supporting field missions.

53. As highlighted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (see A/61/743, para. 99), it has become imperative to establish an enterprise risk management mechanism as a management tool to mitigate risks in achieving the Department's objectives in managing complex, integrated peacekeeping missions operating in increasingly difficult environments. While the General Assembly did not approve resources for the risk management capacity proposed, resources were redeployed temporarily from other areas to enable the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to develop a draft operational risk management strategy and draft policy, which will be aligned with the ongoing Secretariat-wide enterprise risk management framework initiative. In the meantime, in response to demand, a pilot risk assessment for the start-up of UNAMID was conducted, the results of which will be used to calibrate risk management approaches by the two Departments.

54. The relocation of the Senior Leadership Appointments Section to the Office of the Under-Secretary-General from the former Personnel Management Support Service has effectively elevated the profile of the Section and ensured a more consistent alignment with political and operational priorities. That relatively new capacity has improved internal planning, monitoring and support for senior management, and progress is being made towards enhancing processes and procedures for decision-making regarding senior leadership appointments in field missions. The Section has established an active roster of candidates for mission leadership posts and provided renewed levels of support to mission managers and individual candidates alike. The dedicated attention paid to organizational objectives such as improving gender balance is positively reflected in the current number of women performing key leadership functions in field operations, which has increased by more than 45 per cent during the past year.

VI. Role of the Deputy Secretary-General

55. In its resolution 61/279, the General Assembly requested that the role and duties of the Deputy Secretary-General be explicitly defined in this reform, including in relation to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Management. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/12 B, the Deputy Secretary-General assists the Secretary-General in overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat. The role of the Deputy Secretary-General focuses on

strategic management and cross-cutting management policy, ensuring the coordination of key management matters. The Deputy Secretary-General is the Chair of the Management Committee, which is the primary mechanism for ensuring the effective coordination, consideration and approval of internal reform and cross-cutting management matters. As the Management Committee includes the Under-Secretaries-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Political Affairs, Field Support and Management in its membership, the Deputy Secretary-General utilizes it to coordinate and provide guidance on peacekeeping-related management issues.

VII. Related reform initiatives

A. Peace operations 2010

56. The measures set out in the most recent reform agenda are critical to improving the responsiveness, effectiveness and accountability of the United Nations. However, they constitute only part of the response to the current and anticipated challenges in the mounting and sustaining of peacekeeping operations. Through the internal five-year reform programme of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, Peace operations 2010, the Departments are addressing complementary areas that also require priority attention if United Nations peacekeeping is to continue with the process of learning and adapting to evolving challenges, strengthening its expertise and maintaining clarity of purpose. As indicated earlier, these include the areas of doctrine, personnel, partnerships, organization and resources. The progress made in the implementation of the reform programme is outlined in reports to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/61/668 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and A/62/627 and Add.1) and the overview report on the financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/62/727). With the additional resources approved for the 2007/08 period as part of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, further progress has been achieved — and in some cases accelerated — in the implementation of the reform programme.

B. Human resources management

57. The ability to recruit and retain high-quality civilian personnel to work and live in conditions of hardship and insecurity is key to the success of new and existing field missions. Through the restructuring of the Field Personnel Division and with additional human resources management delegations of authority from the Department of Management, the Division has streamlined its structure and focused on supporting the daily operational management of human resources, and on foundational policy, recruitment outreach, career development and quality assurance.

58. The Field Personnel Operations Service, which reflects the regional integrated operational team structure in the Office of Operations to facilitate linkages, is responsible for staffing, travel and administrative support, while the Field Personnel Specialist Support Service is dedicated to the delivery of foundational human resources management support to field missions and integrated operational teams. Key areas of support include the planning and design of mission structures in a

manner that will allow the most effective implementation of mandates and the development of rosters of highly qualified staff members reflecting the broadest possible geographical distribution. In addition, a comprehensive career-development and staff-rotation strategy is being developed to ensure that staff are systematically appraised of, and assisted in obtaining, the professional qualifications and experience required to meet evolving operational demands. The Quality Assurance and Information Management Section conducts quality assurance reviews of the performance of human resources management functions both at Headquarters and in the field and is responsible for developing a cadre of human resources management officers, addressing staff appeals and audits, and incorporating best practices and lessons learned into human resources management policies and procedures applied to field missions. Outreach to peacekeeping partners within the United Nations system, as well as civilian recruitment agencies and Member States, are also being strengthened to address the high vacancy rates in United Nations field missions, ensure gender balance and secure as broad a geographical representation as possible, as well as an appropriate representation of troop- and police-contributing countries, as feasible.

59. The restructuring has already yielded efficiency and productivity gains, including an increase in the deployment of staff members by more than 50 per cent and a reduction in overall vacancy rates. The overall vacancy rate in peacekeeping operations reached 17 per cent as at 31 December 2007, representing a decrease from a 20 per cent vacancy rate the previous year, despite an overall increase of 3,343 positions to be filled. The introduction of occupational group managers with expertise and experience in the areas in which recruitment is under way will make possible more targeted outreach and recruitment efforts to be made while offering serving staff more effective career advice. The implementation of human resources action plans in the field and their planned roll-out to all field missions in July 2008 will enhance human resources planning and self-monitoring, delineate roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for human resources management in the field, and identify areas where field missions require strengthened support from Headquarters. The human resources action plan framework for field missions addresses strategically important management areas and incorporates the responsibility and accountability of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General/head of mission in terms of meeting pre-agreed goals and targets in each management area. Additionally, backlog in the processing of staff selections regarding movements to a higher level are being cleared under the enhanced delegation of authority given to the Department of Field Support. Further progress is anticipated as staff selected to fill the new positions approved as part of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of the Department of Field Support assume their functions.

C. Procurement

60. Recognizing the complex and unique circumstances associated with procurement for United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Secretary-General, in his reform agenda aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Organization to manage and sustain peace operations (A/61/749 and A/61/858 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2), proposed the realignment of field procurement functions from the Department of Management to the Department of Field Support.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/279, decided to revert to the procurement proposals following the submission of the report of the Secretary-General requested in its resolution 61/246.

61. In accordance with that resolution and recognizing that procurement is one of the most important enabling functions for peacekeeping missions, in particular for their start-up, continued discussions are under way between the Department of Field Support and the Department of Management on ways to ensure timely and effective procurement support to the field, including through the closer involvement of procurement staff in the planning process, programme delivery and contract oversight, as well as further action to better align responsibility, accountability and authority for field procurement. The report of the Secretary-General on procurement governance will be submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed sixty-second session.

D. Communications and information technology

62. The Communications and Information Technology Service of the Department of Field Support plays an instrumental role in facilitating unity of command and mission management and the safety and security of personnel through the provision of 24-hour, 7-day, reliable, secure voice and data communications to field missions, including to military and police components. It has also assumed a leading role, together with the Chief Information Technology Officer and the Information Technology Services Division within the Department of Management, in the development and launching of a number of Secretariat enterprise management and administrative systems for all core areas of its business, including finance, human resources and logistics, such as enterprise resource planning, enterprise content management and international public sector accounting systems.

63. In an effort to optimize information and communications technology capacity to more effectively and efficiently address the strategic information needs of the Organization in achieving its mandates, the position of Chief Information Technology Officer at the Assistant Secretary-General level was established in July 2006, with responsibility for developing for the Organization an overall strategic vision in the areas of information and communications technology and knowledge management; coordinating the implementation of major information and communications technology initiatives; promulgating policies on information technology matters; coordinating, through appropriate delegation, information and communications technology operations within the Secretariat; and ensuring the application of uniform information and communications technology standards across the Organization. The mandate of the Chief Information Technology Officer will reinforce the ability of the Department of Field Support to deliver dedicated support to field operations through enhanced coordination within the Secretariat, as well as the systematic, structured review and identification of additional policy requirements and compliance mechanisms.

E. Office of Military Affairs

64. In its resolution 61/279, the General Assembly requested a comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping

Operations, taking into consideration the findings of the report on the Strategic Military Cell and the lessons learned from the first period of the expansion of the Office of Military Affairs, to enable the General Assembly to review and further strengthen the functions of the Office.

65. Following a comprehensive review of the Office of Military Affairs, the Secretary-General will submit to the General Assembly a proposal aimed at considerably reinforcing the capacity of the military component, particularly as it affects the strategic direction, oversight and specialist advice and support provided to peacekeeping operations, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of United Nations field operations and enhancing the protection of peacekeeping personnel. As part of the restructuring process, specific proposals will be made to incorporate the strongest features of the Strategic Military Cell into the Office of Military Affairs for the benefit of all peacekeeping operations. To ensure unity of effort and the rationalization of resources, a proposal to reduce the size of the Strategic Military Cell and incorporate it into the Office of Military Affairs as a separate but integral crisis cell will also be made, with a view to maintaining its core capacities until they have been incorporated into the structure of the Office of Military Affairs. A comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs will be presented to the General Assembly in a separate report (A/62/752), including related requirements and associated financial resources, to be considered by the Assembly during the second part of its resumed sixty-second session.

VIII. Evolution of the support account

66. In paragraph 32 of its resolution 61/279, the General Assembly recalled paragraph 13 of its resolution 60/268 and reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to submit to it the findings of a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the support account.

67. Pursuant to a request contained in paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 60/268, a preliminary external study of the evolution of the support account was undertaken. The study was aimed at examining the backstopping requirements for peacekeeping operations vis-à-vis the growth in the number of such operations and their complexity in order to attempt to establish clear linkages between the two and to propose a budget model that would allow adequate backstopping support for the missions while maintaining flexibility in the determination of support account staffing requirements.

68. The Secretariat, having thoroughly reviewed the findings and recommendations contained in the preliminary study, noted that they were primarily of a theoretical nature and did not propose any new approach to the determination of support account staffing requirements.

69. Furthermore, following the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of the Department of Field Support, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/279, it is necessary to take a fresh look at the overall issue in the light of the structural and functional changes within the two Departments, which are expected to be completed by 30 June 2008.

70. Accordingly, it is expected that a report on the findings of a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the support account for peacekeeping operations will be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

IX. Initial impact of restructuring

71. Although the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support are in the early stages of implementation in the restructuring process, the impact of initial efforts is already evident in certain areas. The separation of the Office of Mission Support from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the creation of the Department of Field Support has raised the level of engagement with Member States on support issues, resulting in an increased awareness and appreciation by Member States of the undertaking and of the enterprise required to mount and support peacekeeping operations.

72. The establishment of integrated structures in closely related areas of activity is enabling the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to adopt more holistic and coherent approaches to its work. The creation of new capacities is enabling the Department to begin institutionalizing or building on established expertise in areas where the Organization is being requested to assist national capacities during periods of stabilization in order to take advantage of political momentum to build a sustainable peace. New capacities such as partnerships are also beginning to strengthen the ability of United Nations peacekeeping operations to engage in ongoing institutional development.

73. The restructuring process has given new impetus to the strengthening of the coordination and integration of programmatic and support activities, which is beginning to lead to the more effective and efficient management of and support to missions in cross-cutting areas of activity. In addition, the increased delegation of authority given to the Department of Field Support in human resources management is helping to streamline review and decision-making processes, which is allowing the delivery of more efficient and responsive services to missions.

X. Challenges

74. Since the reform proposals were made, in April 2007, the demand for United Nations peacekeeping has continued unabated. Following Security Council resolutions 1769 (2007) and 1778 (2007), concerning Darfur and concerning Chad and the Central African Republic, respectively, the United Nations has had to plan and launch two unique and highly complex operations; the former constitutes the largest, most complex and challenging peacekeeping operation the Organization has undertaken to date. These missions have resulted in an authorized increase of up to approximately 20,000 military personnel and 7,000 police, which, when combined with the civilian personnel for these missions, constitutes an overall increase in United Nations field personnel of more than 30 per cent.

75. UNAMID and MINURCAT represent significant departures from previous cooperation models between United Nations peacekeeping operations and regional organizations. As operations with interlinked mandates, they obligate partnerships to evolve to a new level of effort and detail in all areas of activity, including planning,

force generation, deployment, support and monitoring, to ensure the coherence and mutual reinforcement of efforts. In addition to cooperation in the operational context, a significant investment has been made in connection with long-term peacekeeping capacity-building in Africa. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is working with the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities and international partners to develop a coherent approach to providing support to the establishment and strengthening of the African Peace and Security Architecture, in furtherance of the objectives of the World Summit Outcome and the 10-year capacity-building plan of 2005. As the process develops, new demands arise, particularly concerning the need for enhanced coordination and visibility and it will be increasingly important to maintain a sustained approach if African Union capacity is to evolve effectively.

76. The sustained surge in demand for United Nations peacekeeping and the growing complexity of peacekeeping environments have tested the ability of the United Nations to meet such unrelenting challenges. At the same time, these circumstances have tested the will of the international community to provide the personnel, finances and logistical and political support required to successfully implement the mandates given to the Secretariat by the Security Council. The provision of resources is not only a matter of quantity; it is also a matter of quality, required for specialized functions to be undertaken or for tasks to be performed that require specialized capabilities. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the area of policing, which is increasingly required to implement complex reform, restructuring and rebuilding mandates — its authorized strength in peacekeeping operations has increased by more than 65 per cent during the past seven months; and in Darfur, where the Organization faces a considerable risk of failure without the support urgently required from Member States.

77. Undertaking an intensive reform of peacekeeping while launching the most challenging mission in the history of United Nations peacekeeping has also served to reinforce some of the challenges the Organization faces. Most notable has been the challenge of carrying out detailed planning before the launch of complex operations without prejudging the political decisions to be made by Member States. This not only entails significant financial costs owing to the need for accelerated deployment but can also have a considerable political cost in terms of momentum lost after the signing of a peace agreement or ceasefire. Working within the Organization's rules and regulations, which are not designed to meet the particular needs and realities of peacekeeping operations, has been another major challenge. The Secretariat will be required to formulate proposals for the approval of Member States in order to make further progress in this regard, including the enhancement of rapid-deployment capabilities.

78. The conditions of service offered to staff serving in United Nations field operations pose critical obstacles to the recruitment of highly qualified civilian personnel, as demonstrated by the high vacancy and turnover rates. Building on the lessons learned by and the experience of field-based organizations within the United Nations system, the Secretary-General submitted for the approval of the General Assembly a comprehensive package of human resources management reforms in the report entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255 and Add. 1 and Add.1/Corr.1) and in other reports, including on the streamlining of contractual arrangements for all categories of staff (A/62/274), the harmonization of conditions of service of staff serving in United Nations field operations with those offered by other organizations

within the United Nations system (A/61/861), and the establishment of a cadre of 2,500 career staff to meet the current and anticipated medium-term baseline staffing requirements for peacekeeping operations and special political missions (A/61/850).

79. The International Civil Service Commission supported the proposals of the Secretary-General to streamline contractual arrangements, harmonized conditions of service for staff in the field and the creation of a career cadre of 2,500 civilian peacekeepers. In its report on human resources management (A/62/7/Add.14), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended approval of the proposal to harmonize the designation of missions on the basis of the security phase and the replacement of the occasional recuperation break with rest and recuperation travel. It also recommended that consideration of the introduction of the special operations approach be deferred. It did not recommend the establishment of the proposed cadre of 2,500 civilian peacekeepers, given its view that the streamlining of contractual arrangements and the harmonization of conditions of service would address many of the concerns that had given rise to the proposal to establish the peacekeeping cadre. The human resources reform proposals of the Secretary-General are before the General Assembly for its consideration during its resumed sixty-second session.

80. The institutionalization of risk management has been another significant challenge given the multiple priorities that the Departments are managing simultaneously in response to operational demands. As the Secretariat deliberates on its risk management approach, it will be essential to ensure that the core requirements of financial risk management are carefully weighed against the need for flexibility so as to manage operational risk in field operations.

81. The demands made on United Nations peacekeeping have continued to grow during the past six months in ways that could not have been fully planned for when additional resources were approved for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. The Departments are seeking ways to optimize their current resources, particularly in connection with supporting the newly established missions in Darfur and in Chad and the Central African Republic. However, there is still a requirement to ensure the appropriate level of dedicated support for those missions. At the same time, this period has served to validate the resource requests made in the support account budget for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/61/858/Add.1 and Corr.1), as they relate to strengthening leadership within the Department of Field Support and to risk management, strategic planning, public affairs and procurement.

XI. Conclusions

82. The core business of United Nations peacekeeping has evolved significantly during the past decade, as has the context in which field missions operate. Through a series of reforms under way since 2000, the Secretariat has been able to strengthen its capacity to plan, deploy, direct, support and transition out of peacekeeping operations. Those improvements have contributed in part to the exponential demand in recent years for United Nations peacekeeping as an instrument for maintaining international peace and security. Given the growth, dynamism and increasing complexity of United Nations peacekeeping and the environment in which it

operates, further reforms of the Secretariat will undoubtedly be required. These will need to be undertaken in concert with ongoing efforts for institutional development, as the ability of United Nations peacekeeping to evolve at the same pace will be increasingly important to its success.

XII. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

83. The General Assembly is requested to take note of the report.

**General Assembly**

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13 March 2008

Original: English

Sixty-second session**Agenda item 113 (d)****Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs
and other elections: election of fifteen members
of the Human Rights Council****Letter dated 4 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative
of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the President of
the General Assembly**

I have the honour to inform you of the decision of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2008-2011 at the elections to be held in May 2008. As a new member of the United Nations family, Timor-Leste has not yet sought to be elected to an intergovernmental body.

Please find enclosed the voluntary pledges and commitments of Timor-Leste in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Nelson Santos
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 4 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Timor-Leste's voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with resolution 60/251

As one of the world's newest nations, independence marked the watershed of our future. A large part of Timor-Leste's struggle was fought on the humanitarian front and Timor-Leste had been actively engaged in the human rights processes, especially vis-à-vis the Geneva-based human rights mechanisms. It now falls upon us to reverberate our hard-won freedom through respect for human dignity in all of our practices. We have integrated the promotion and protection of human rights into all areas of life.

Timor-Leste takes its obligations and duties as party to the numerous conventions and treaties listed below seriously. Of important note is the comprehensive national report submitted in 2006 on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, in compliance with Article 44 1(a) of the Convention.

As an extension of Timor-Leste's obligations towards upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, Timor-Leste is an active participant in the work of the Third Committee through sponsoring important resolutions that safeguard the sanctity of human life and protect basic human rights.

Timor-Leste's international commitment to promote human rights

Timor-Leste is committed to striving for the highest standards of human rights around the world and believes that the establishment of the new Human Rights Council is crucial in the promotion and protection of these standards. As Timor-Leste celebrates its 5-year anniversary of independence, the time is ripe to share the unique experiences gained in the field of human rights and the process of national building. Timor-Leste therefore believes that being elected to serve on the Human Rights Council will fulfil an important mission of giving back to the international community.

Timor-Leste will participate actively in the work of the Human Rights Council, in the spirit of openness, cooperation and dialogue with all partners. Timor-Leste will actively consult and work with United Nations Member States, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society on the issues before the Human Rights Council, including the creation of an effective universal periodic review mechanism.

Timor-Leste will encourage governments around the world to ratify the United Nations human rights treaties.

Timor-Leste's domestic commitment to uphold human rights standards

The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste provides the blueprint for the principles and structure of the nation. All institutions of State owe their existence to, and derive their mandates and responsibilities from, this

constitutional framework where all human rights are safeguarded. The members of the Constituent Assembly solemnly reaffirmed their determination to fight all forms of tyranny, oppression, social or religious domination and segregation, to defend national independence and to respect and guarantee human rights and fundamental rights of citizens (preamble, para. 32).

Timor-Leste has a general framework for the protection and promotion of human rights and human rights norms across multiple institutions that cover: a general legal framework and domestic application of rights; human rights focal points and gender focal points across many sectors of government; human rights in parliament with a special committee on "Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Liberties and Guarantees"; comprehensive human rights training and education for government officials, judicial actors, public figures, teachers and students, non-governmental organizations and citizens.

The Government of Timor-Leste views information dissemination about human rights instruments as an integral part of individual and community empowerment of rights, and the Office of the Adviser on Human Rights to the Prime Minister and the Office for the Promotion of Equality have been and will continue to be active in this regard.

Timor-Leste's independent media, both print and broadcast, has devoted time and space to public information and contributed to the debate of human rights issues. Civil society has been an active partner in Timor-Leste through the active monitoring of human rights norms and practices.

Timor-Leste has always had full cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights both in Dili and internationally.

Timor-Leste has a history of peace, reconciliation and commitment to human rights through the establishment of the Commission on Truth and Friendship and the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation.

Core human rights treaties to which Timor-Leste is party

Timor-Leste pledges to uphold all duties and obligations as set forth in being party to the following core human rights treaties:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

International Covenant against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Convention on the Rights of the Child

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (aiming at the abolition of the death penalty)

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

Other human rights and related instruments to which Timor-Leste is party

Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (1997)

The Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of armed conflict (1949)

Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (1977)

Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (1977)

Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)

Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998)

**General Assembly**

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Sixty-second session**Agenda item 11****Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion****Letter dated 12 March 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to request you kindly to circulate as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 11, a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus regarding the imposition by the United States of America of additional economic restrictions against enterprises of the "Belneftekhim" concern (see annex).

(Signed) Andrei Dapkiunas



Annex to the letter dated 12 March 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

7 March 2008

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus regarding the imposition by the United States of America of additional economic restrictions against enterprises of the "Belneftekhim" concern

Over a considerable period of time, the Republic of Belarus has taken a number of consistent and constructive steps to normalize relations with the European Union and the United States, pursuant to the agreements with our Western partners.

However, one of the participants in the dialogue, the United States of America, ignoring prior agreements, has disrupted the agreed scheme of actions to normalize relations and imposed additional economic restrictions against enterprises of the "Belneftekhim" concern.

Belarus declares that it will reciprocate with tough measures. The United States was notified in advance of the nature of those measures. One of those measures is the recalling of the Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the United States, Mr. Mikhail Khvostov, to Minsk for consultations. At the same time, the Government of the Republic of Belarus urges that the Ambassador of the United States in Minsk, Ms. Karen Stewart should leave our country for the same purpose.

Belarus underscores, in particular, that by signing the Helsinki Final Act, the United States, as well as the other Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) member States undertook to "refrain from any act of economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by another participating State of the rights inherent in its sovereignty". The recent steps taken by the United States administration against Belarus are in direct breach of that undertaking and pose a challenge to all the members of OSCE.

We are forced once again to state that OSCE, which we are firmly convinced should be an effective instrument for the protection of the rights and interests of its member States, has failed to exercise its direct mandate in this situation and to respond to the gross violation of the fundamental principles of the Organization on the part of the American administration.

Belarus demands that OSCE should take immediate action effectively to ensure that this member State respects the fundamental principles of the Organization and fulfils its international commitments.

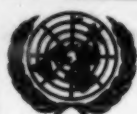
If this does not happen, we will be forced to give serious thought to the manner in which we should conduct our future relations with this Organization.

The actions of the United States are in gross violation of the 1994 Memorandum, whereby the United States undertook to respect the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus, and, in particular, not to exert any economic

pressure on it, in exchange for the voluntary renunciation by our country of the possession of nuclear weapons. Belarus calls upon the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation, as the guarantors of its accession to the Memorandum, to take immediate action to ensure that the commitments under the Memorandum are met by all its participants. The Republic of Belarus underlines that the United States' violation of the provisions of the Memorandum completely undermines its trustworthiness as a partner. Is it possible to trust the United States after this, especially in such a strategic matter as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons?

The actions of the United States also arouse rightful indignation since they were carried out notwithstanding United Nations General Assembly resolution 62/183, which states that "no State may use or encourage the use of unilateral economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights". Moreover, General Assembly resolution 62/162, "Human rights and unilateral coercive measures", "Urges all States to stop adopting or implementing any unilateral measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States, in particular those of a coercive nature with all their extraterritorial effects".

The Republic of Belarus will continue to be guided in its activities by universally accepted international principles and its own laws.



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Sixty-second session

Agenda items 140 and 153 (b)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell

Report of the Secretary-General

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Summary

The General Assembly, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 61/250 B, requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including clarification of its role and functioning, its relationship with the Military Division (now Office of Military Affairs) and lessons learned for the military planning of large-scale and complex existing and future peacekeeping operations, as well as proposals for strengthening the capacity of the Office of Military Affairs, and to report to it thereon at the second part of its resumed sixty-first session.

In response to that request, an initial report, containing preliminary observations as a first step of a comprehensive review process, was submitted in April 2007 when the Strategic Military Cell had been operational for just over six months.

In its resolution 61/250 C, the General Assembly recalled its request for a report at the second part of its resumed sixty-second session on the results of the comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including its recommended life cycle, a rationale for its current staffing level, its relationship and modalities of coordination with the Military Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, its impact on the efforts to achieve unity of command and integration in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the cost-effectiveness of its functioning, its interaction with other parts of the Secretariat and the possibility of applying the approach to other missions, in particular the large-scale and complex ones.

The present report, building on the report of April 2007, responds to those requests. Section I provides a summary of the background to the establishment of the Strategic Military Cell in 2006. Section II highlights the concept, structure and tasks of the Cell. Section III describes progress and achievements of the Cell. Section IV sets out options for the future phased reduction of the Cell in the context of the recent comprehensive analysis of the Office of Military Affairs. Section V contains conclusions and observations.

Annex I provides a summary of the outputs of the Strategic Military Cell since its establishment, annex II provides the current organization chart of the Cell and annex III contains proposed organization charts for the Cell as its core capacities are incorporated into the Office of Military Affairs as part of the overall restructuring and strengthening of that Office.

I. Background

1. Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) marked the crucial step in the cessation of month-long hostilities between Hizbullah and Israel in Lebanon on 14 August 2006. Intensive fighting had resulted in approximately 1,200 casualties, thousands injured, the displacement of almost 1 million civilians and widespread destruction in Lebanon. By the same resolution, the Security Council authorized the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to undertake a series of immediate and substantial new tasks in addition to those mandated under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). These included assistance to the Lebanese armed forces to fully deploy in southern Lebanon; coordination of activities with the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel; assistance to the Lebanese armed forces in taking steps towards the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL; and, assistance to the Government of Lebanon, at its request, to maintain border security to prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel, including through the Maritime Task Force.
2. The Security Council, in its resolution 1701 (2006), authorized an increase in the force strength of UNIFIL from 2,000 to a maximum of 15,000 troops in order to supplement and enhance UNIFIL in terms of numbers, mandate and scope of operations to carry out its additional mandated tasks. It also requested the Secretary-General to urgently put in place measures to ensure that UNIFIL was able to carry out the functions envisaged in this resolution. The requirements identified for successful mandate implementation included the deployment of technologically sophisticated assets; the adoption of robust and effective rules of engagement; and a significantly strengthened Force with increased military capacities for rapid deployment; more flexible administrative and financial arrangements; and innovative measures to augment the military planning capacities of the Secretariat.
3. In the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/670) of 18 August 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), the need to strengthen the former Military Division (now the Office of Military Affairs) in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to effectively support the scope and complexity of military tasks to be performed by UNIFIL was set out. In response to the specific recommendation of the Secretary-General in his reports (S/2006/670 and S/2006/730), a Strategic Military Cell was created with the full complement of expert military capacities to ensure that the UNIFIL expansion, deployment and additional mandated responsibilities were conducted with and supported by sufficiently dedicated capabilities, employing best practices and lessons learned from contemporary military planning and strategic guidance. The Cell was established by drawing on the institutional expertise of the Office of Military Affairs and augmented by officers from key troop-contributing countries.
4. The General Assembly, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 61/250 B, requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including clarification of its role and functioning, its relationship with the Office of Military Affairs and lessons learned for the military planning and guidance of large-scale and complex existing and future peacekeeping operations, as well as proposals for strengthening the capacity of the Office of Military Affairs, and to report to it thereon at the second part of its resumed sixty-first session. An initial

report was submitted in response to that request in April 2007 when the Strategic Military Cell had been operational for just over six months. That report contained preliminary observations and was the first step in a comprehensive review process.

5. In resolution 61/250 C, the General Assembly recalled its request for a report at the second part of its resumed sixty-second session on the results of the comprehensive review of the Strategic Military Cell, including its recommended life cycle, a rationale for its current staffing level, its relationship and modalities of coordination with the Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, its impact on the efforts to achieve unity of command and integration in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the cost-effectiveness of its functioning, its interaction with other parts of the Secretariat and the possibility of applying the approach to other missions, in particular the large-scale and complex ones.

6. The present report provides a comprehensive review of the Cell and proposes options for the future phased reduction of the Strategic Military Cell in the context of the overall restructuring and strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs.

II. Concept and structure of the Strategic Military Cell

A. Concept: rationale and role

7. Contemporary military operations benefit from having a strategic military headquarters, including strategic guidance and oversight, as well as military expertise to support specialized military capabilities. The Strategic Military Cell constitutes a strengthened, multifunctional strategic-level military structure with military expertise to support specialized military capabilities, which is responsible for the provision of military advice to the senior management of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UNIFIL Force Commander, and for ensuring that the analysis, assessment, planning, command and control, and support and evaluation needs of the Mission and the Secretariat are comprehensively addressed.

8. The significance of the role of the Strategic Military Cell is derived from the complexity, risks and strategic implications of conducting peacekeeping operations in highly sensitive and complex political and operational environments. The mandated tasks of UNIFIL require not only the routine monitoring and support of the Force, but also contingency planning and operational preparedness to enable it to adapt and respond to new and unexpected situations.

B. Structure

9. The Strategic Military Cell consists of the Office of the Director and six branches as set out in the report of April 2007. The Director of the Strategic Military Cell reports to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, functions in close coordination with the Military Adviser in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and coordinates with the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support. The Strategic Military Cell is staffed primarily by military officers from troop-contributing countries to UNIFIL, which has created a strengthened sense of ownership and accountability for the deployed troops. The staffing of the Strategic

Military Cell also draws on the resources of the Office of Military Affairs, in particular, but not limited to, the force generation functions of the Office of Military Affairs. The military joint branch structure divides military staff activities into clearly defined functional areas and mirrors the military functional structure established in UNIFIL and other peacekeeping operations at the Force headquarters and Sector levels.

10. The Strategic Military Cell carries out its activities in the framework of established integrated planning mechanisms within the Secretariat, as well as command and coordination processes within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations is responsible for the direction of the Strategic Military Cell, and is supported by the Office of Operations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the strategic and executive direction of peacekeeping operations. As part of these functions, the Office of Operations coordinates and integrates relevant information and contributions from within the Department, including the Strategic Military Cell and the Department of Field Support, to enable the implementation of Security Council mandates within the overall political and strategic direction provided by the Under-Secretary-General. As with all peacekeeping operations, the Office of Operations is responsible for fulfilling the reporting requirements of the Secretariat to the Security Council for UNIFIL, to which the Strategic Military Cell contributes.

11. As the focal point for the provision of strategic and operational level military advice related to UNIFIL, the Strategic Military Cell coordinates closely with the Office of Military Affairs to ensure that military plans and guidance are consistent with the Organization's approach, policy application and procedures for current operations and planning across peacekeeping operations. In addition, the Strategic Military Cell works with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations Situation Centre in monitoring the situation in Lebanon, and the operations monitoring component of the Strategic Military Cell is co-located in the Situation Centre for that purpose. Coordination is also maintained between the Strategic Military Cell and the Department of Field Support on issues related to logistics, finance and personnel support.

12. Within the overall integrated approach of delivery to the field of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, coordination is facilitated through a number of specific mechanisms. The Strategic Military Cell participates in weekly UNIFIL working group meetings chaired by the Office of Operations, which bring together Political Affairs Officers and representatives from the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support, including its logistics, financial and personnel specialists, to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach. The working group meets to evaluate progress and developments within the mission area and identifies cross-cutting issues to be addressed at the interdepartmental level. Representatives from the various offices within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support also participate in the periodic videoconference meetings held between the Strategic Military Cell and UNIFIL.

13. The cost-effectiveness of the Strategic Military Cell, whose budget has been less than 1 per cent of the UNIFIL budget, is measured by the impact of its activities, which are set out below.

III. Functions and activities of the Strategic Military Cell

14. The Strategic Military Cell has succeeded in fulfilling its envisaged role by providing additional support to ensure that the UNIFIL expansion, deployment and additional mandated responsibilities have been supported by sufficiently dedicated strategic level capabilities.

A. Monitoring and assessment

15. The Strategic Military Cell contributes to the monitoring and assessment of the operational environment in Lebanon and UNIFIL-related military oversight and planning activities within the Secretariat. This includes the development of threat assessments and daily reporting on UNIFIL military activities. Strategic military guidance is provided to UNIFIL by the Strategic Military Cell, which also develops strategic-level contingency planning in close consultation with the field. New military capabilities for UNIFIL on the ground have been generated, such as the Community Outreach Unit, and the Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance Unit, as well as electronic countermeasures to mitigate the risks posed by improvised explosive devices.

16. The Strategic Military Cell regularly reviews and assesses the effectiveness of the military component of UNIFIL and proposes adjustments, as appropriate. This includes reviewing the implementation of the military strategic concept of operation, rules of engagement and Force and troop requirements, as well as conducting ship/troop-to-task analyses, identifying new capabilities and providing specialist military advice to memorandums of understanding and letter-of-assist negotiations. The Strategic Military Cell provides an ongoing assessment of the operational effectiveness of the Force, regularly reviews the threat and risk assessment and develops likely scenarios to support contingency planning.

17. The Strategic Military Cell has conducted comprehensive research in response to developments in the field to inform the UNIFIL working group and senior management of implications for and possible impact on the mission. In addition, the Cell has developed a regional assessment as it affects the situation in Lebanon, in order to identify likely future scenarios. This assessment has been shared within the Secretariat.

18. The Strategic Military Cell has also contributed to the development of UNIFIL guidelines to establish the Joint Mission Analysis Centre and Joint Operations Centre in the field. The concept for both Centres was developed following consultation with the field and the UNIFIL working group. The Cell is continuously seeking improvements in the collation and analysis of information from the field and other sources in order to enhance decision-making in headquarters and to support commanders in the field.

B. Crisis response

19. The Strategic Military Cell also participates in departmental crisis response measures in accordance with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations crisis response policy. This participation was critical following the bomb attack on UNIFIL on 24 June 2007 that killed six peacekeepers serving with the Spanish

contingent, particularly with regard to the definition and provision of mitigating measures. The Cell demonstrated its ability to effectively support the response of Headquarters to a crisis in the field by providing specialist technical advice and assessments and assisting UNIFIL in reviewing its operational methods and contingency plans. In addition, the Strategic Military Cell, working in close coordination with UNIFIL, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Safety and Security, established a Theatre Frequency Management Cell in the field to coordinate the effective employment of electronic and radio transmissions in the mission area. This ensures that at all times, and particularly during a crisis, all electronic and radio technologies work efficiently and are unaffected by one another.

C. Relationship with troop-contributing countries

20. The Cell maintains close and regular dialogue with troop-contributing countries to keep them apprised of the status of mandate implementation. The Strategic Military Cell maintains liaison arrangements with the troop contributors through the Military Advisers of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York. This liaison permits a regular exchange of information and discussion on military and technical matters. The Strategic Military Cell has held troop-contributing countries meetings, informal meetings with maritime contributing countries, and bilateral meetings to discuss the preparation and deployment of national contributions. The Cell also supports the Office of Operations in interactions regarding operational matters with Member States that are not troop contributors.

21. The Strategic Military Cell, in consultation with the Department of Field Support, UNIFIL and Member States, reviewed the UNIFIL contingent-owned equipment mission factors and proposed changes to the hostile action and forced abandonment mission factor to reflect prevailing operational conditions more accurately.

D. Planning

22. The specific military technical specialties provided in the Strategic Military Cell structure directly mirror those functions in the UNIFIL Force headquarters and so permits direct technical links for military matters, as well as specialist interlocutors at Headquarters for civilian counterparts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Safety and Security. This capacity allows for a collaborative planning process to be implemented at the strategic, operational and tactical or field levels and ensures unity of effort. This has accelerated the planning process and allowed the development and maintenance of a common operational view between Headquarters and the field, which has strengthened unity of command and coherence in decision-making.

23. Initially, the Cell focused on the urgent planning requirements related to the UNIFIL enhancement, as well as the deployment of troops and specialized capabilities into the mission area. The Cell also reviewed the force requirements and the operational effectiveness of the military component and recommended

adjustments. In addition, and in coordination with UNIFIL, the Cell reviewed the UNIFIL rules of engagement. The Strategic Military Cell has supported the operational planning of the military component, as requested by the Force Commander. It has also established specific measures to monitor the status of implementation of the tasks in the field.

24. The planning element of the Strategic Military Cell, supported by its intelligence and analysis element, provides the basis for multiple multifunctional planning teams drawing on other specialists from within the Cell, in such fields as personnel administration, military logistics, and maritime, land and information operations. These highly capable military planning teams can also be expanded to include representatives from the Office of Operations, the Force Generation Service of the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support, when necessary. These planning teams conduct research and analysis to develop strategic guidance to the field and contingency plans.

25. The Strategic Military Cell has also strengthened scenario planning to support operational contingencies. The Cell has developed several likely scenarios with political, social and economic aspects and consequences identified that would affect UNIFIL mandate implementation. These projections are based on possible evolutions of the current situation in Lebanon and are intended to inform contingency planning. These scenarios will be further refined as the situation evolves in the field.

E. Maritime Task Force

26. Significant effort was invested by the Strategic Military Cell to establish the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force, involving considerable land and maritime planning activity and several technical meetings with troop-contributing countries.

27. The Strategic Military Cell's maritime, land and logistics elements provide technical interlocutors and counterparts for the Force, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries. Specifically, the Cell has supported the Force Generation Service of the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support in technical negotiations with Member States regarding memorandums of understanding and letters-of-assist. For example, the Strategic Military Cell assisted the Department of Field Support with the preparation of the letter-of-assist for the UNIFIL maritime units by providing specialist technical advice, recommendations, statistics and estimates on proposed maritime operations.

28. The Cell's advice on maritime activities has included assessments and recommendations on current and likely developments that could affect UNIFIL maritime and land operations, which has strengthened decision-making and contingency planning. The Cell has been able to address the range of technical maritime operating procedures and negotiations necessary to successfully employ a United Nations maritime capability.

29. The Strategic Military Cell has been able to effectively address the absence of maritime planning and deployment expertise in the Secretariat to support the enhancement of UNIFIL and also enabled naval capabilities, personnel, units and equipment to be appropriately considered in deliberations and procedures relating to contingent-owned equipment. The Strategic Military Cell has also assisted the Force

Generation Service of the Office of Military Affairs to review the maritime component in the tables of organization and equipment. This specialist capacity has enabled the Secretariat to strengthen its ability to plan and conduct maritime operations in the future. The Strategic Military Cell has also assisted the Secretariat in identifying lessons related to establishing a Maritime Task Force. Annex I provides a summary of the outputs of the Strategic Military Cell since its establishment.

IV. Options for the future of the Strategic Military Cell

30. The Strategic Military Cell was created to more effectively enable the Secretariat to support UNIFIL in carrying out its Security Council-mandated tasks. The structure and specialist military functions of the Strategic Military Cell (see annex II) have reflected and effectively addressed the complexity of the peacekeeping challenges in Lebanon. While the enhancement of UNIFIL is now complete, the implementation of the mandated tasks in such a politically and operationally complex environment demands that the multifunctional oversight and management specialties provided by the Cell are retained at an appropriate level of capacity.

31. The Strategic Military Cell has not only proved to be an extremely useful resource in UNIFIL, but has also demonstrated the value of committing sufficient resources for strategic direction and planning oversight for all peacekeeping operations. Given that UNIFIL still requires support, but not at the capacity level of the current Strategic Military Cell structure, it is recommended that the Strategic Military Cell be downsized and its core capacities be incorporated in a phased manner into the Office of Military Affairs as part of the overall restructuring and strengthening of that Office. This would ensure that UNIFIL would continue to receive the support it requires and that the specialist capacities of the Strategic Military Cell could also be used to provide oversight and management benefits to all peacekeeping operations.

32. A phased downsizing of the Strategic Military Cell is proposed with an initial reduction of 25 per cent during the period from July to December 2008, followed by a further reduction of another 25 per cent of the current strength from January to June 2009. The phased reduction of the Strategic Military Cell would be dependent on the strengthening of the Office of Military Affairs, and the Cell would initially retain a direct reporting line to the Under-Secretary-General during crises, and during routine operations, through the Military Adviser. The precise timing of the phases would be determined by the situation on the ground, consultations with troop-contributing countries, and the progress of the proposed strengthening and restructuring of the Office of Military Affairs, which includes increased strategic direction and oversight, the creation of specialist and crisis response capacities, and mission start-up and expansion capability.

33. The structures of the Strategic Military Cell during the first and second phases are contained in annex III. The restructuring would reconfigure the branch structure, resulting in three main branches: Intelligence, Plans and Support. The existing Land Operations Branch, Maritime Branch and Planning Branch would merge into a Plans Branch, while the Personnel Branch would join the Logistics Branch in a Support Branch. Once the Strategic Military Cell is fully integrated into the strengthened

Office for Military Affairs, the head of the Strategic Military Cell will report to the Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, through the Military Adviser.

V. Observations and conclusions

34. As a temporary means of augmenting overstretched capacities during the start-up phase for the expansion of UNIFIL, the Strategic Military Cell has proved to be an extremely useful resource, increasing the military strategic planning and oversight capacity within the Secretariat for UNIFIL. A multifunctional military strategic capability is essential when an operation is conducted in a complex and politically sensitive environment, requiring the deployment of sophisticated assets, military capability and equipment.

35. In particular, the monitoring and assessment, crisis response, troop-contributing countries liaison, and planning and maritime task force expertise activities of the Strategic Military Cell have borne out the value of such a resource for a peacekeeping operation.

36. In regard to monitoring and assessment activities, the Strategic Military Cell has developed threat assessments; provided daily reporting and regular strategic military guidance; created new military capabilities; reviewed and assessed the effectiveness of the military component of the Force; provided ongoing assessments of the operational effectiveness of the Force; carried out research on developments in the field; and contributed to the development of guidelines to establish the Joint Mission Analysis Centre and Joint Operations Centre in UNIFIL.

37. The Strategic Military Cell has also participated in departmental crisis response measures, including, in conjunction with the mission and other Departments, establishing a Theatre Frequency Management Cell. In addition, the maintenance of close and regular dialogue with troop-contributing countries has enabled Member States to provide information and assistance swiftly and has also kept Member States fully abreast of political and operational developments.

38. Additional planning capacity for UNIFIL has been provided by the Strategic Military Cell, including reviewing force requirements and operational effectiveness, reviewing the UNIFIL rules of engagement, supporting the operational planning of the military component, establishing measures to monitor the implementation of tasks in the field, creating multifunctional planning teams, and strengthening scenario planning. With regard to the Maritime Task Force, the Strategic Military Cell has provided technical interlocutors, supported force generation by the Office of Military Affairs and the Department of Field Support, and provided advice on maritime activities, including technical maritime operating procedures.

39. The establishment of the Strategic Military Cell has, for the first time, provided resources to ensure a dedicated and coherent strategic military planning and oversight capacity to a mission operating in a highly challenging and evolving political and operational environment. The contribution of the Strategic Military Cell has been essential in ensuring the delivery of Headquarters support to UNIFIL, including the provision of integrated support. Given that the benefits that the Strategic Military Cell has demonstrated are applicable to all peacekeeping operations, it is important to capitalize upon this expertise and expand these benefits

across all peacekeeping operations while at the same time ensuring that adequate support is maintained for UNIFIL. In particular, it is anticipated that complex missions will benefit from the additional military information analysis capability and the aviation and maritime experts who will be able to establish requirements, plan appropriately to meet these requirements, monitor implementation and draft rules of engagement. These proposed adjustments would, to a large extent, be linked to the evolution of capacities within the Office of Military Affairs, the details of which are further elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring of the Office.

VI. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

40. The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report.

Annex I

Summary of outputs since the establishment of the Strategic Military Cell

Monitoring and assessment

Daily UNIFIL monitoring and assessment briefings	353
Weekly assessment reports to the Under-Secretary-General	60
Videoconference with Force headquarters	33
Assessment/evaluation on specific topics	10
Reconnaissance in the field	9
Surge activations of the Cell	3
Outcome-based assessment process	continuous
Assessment of internal work	continuous

Planning

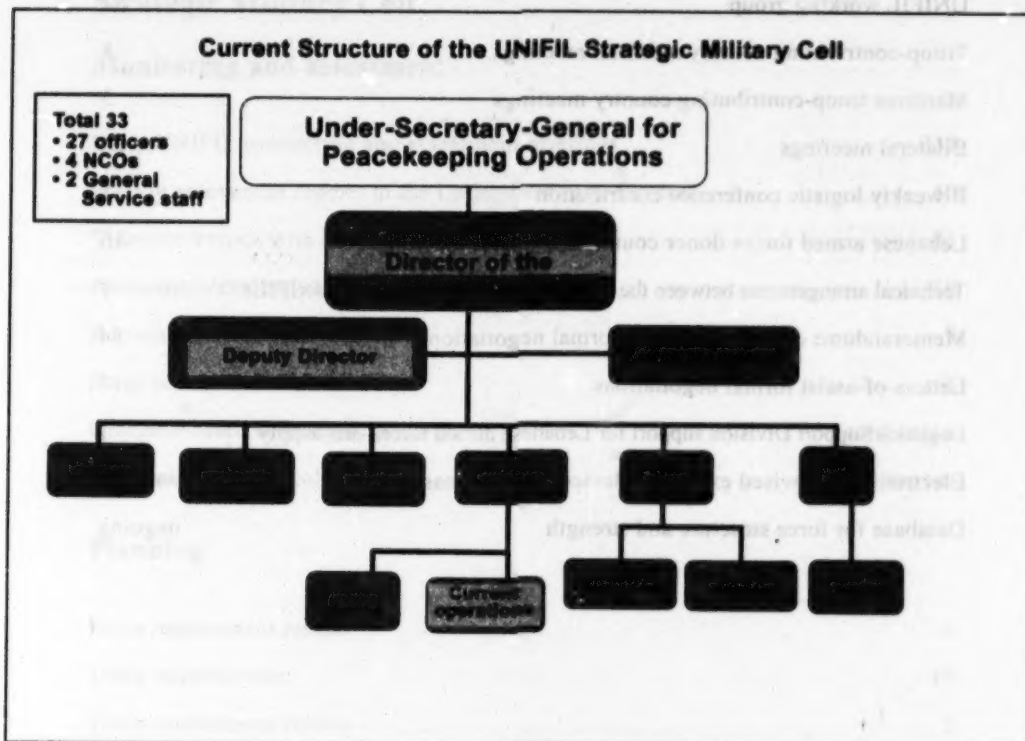
Force requirement review	1
Troop requirements	19
Troop requirement review	2
Troop requirements under draft	2
Force headquarters structure review	3
Sector headquarters structure review	2
Rules of engagement revision	1
Contingency plans	3
Strategic guidance	2
Strategic operational plans	1
Joint Mission Analysis Cell duties and organization	1
Time for generating and deploying UNIFIL forces	4 months
Enhanced rapidly deployable capacities	continuous

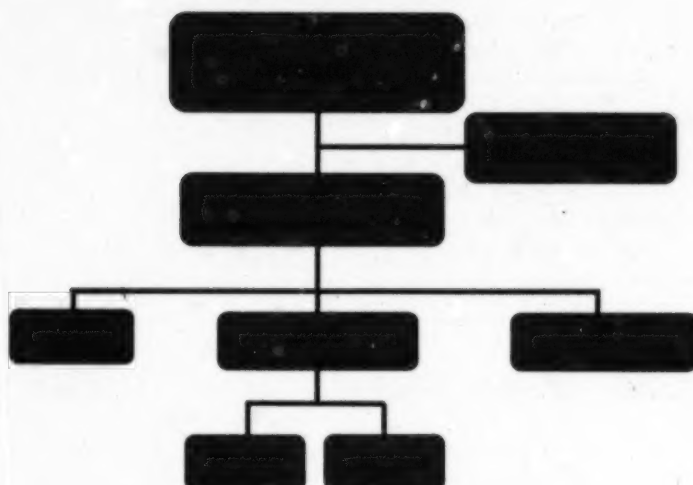
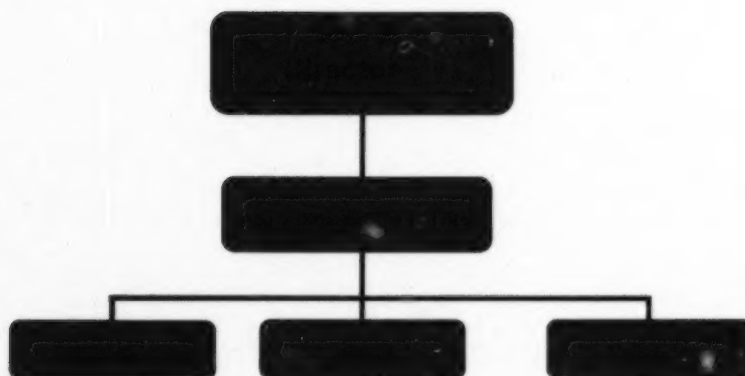
Support

UNIFIL working group	82
Troop-contributing country informal meetings	8
Maritime troop-contributing country meetings	5
Bilateral meetings	30
Biweekly logistic conference contribution	11
Lebanese armed forces donor countries bilateral meetings	10
Technical arrangements between the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL	1
Memorandums of understanding, formal negotiations	54
Letters-of-assist formal negotiations	17
Logistics Support Division support for Lebanese armed forces fuel supply	1
Electronic improvised explosive device countermeasures	ongoing
Database for force structure and strength	ongoing

Annex II

Organization chart of the Strategic Military Cell



Annex III**Envisaged structure of the Strategic Military Cell****Strategic Military Cell
(July-December 2008)****Strategic Military Cell
(January-June 2009)**

**General Assembly**

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Sixty-second session**Agenda item 113 (d)****Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and
other elections: election of fifteen members of the
Human Rights Council****Note verbale dated 15 February 2008 from the Permanent Mission
of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat**

The Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has the honour to inform it that the Government of Chile has decided to put forward its candidacy for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the period 2008-2011, elections for which will be held in May 2008 in New York.

The Permanent Mission of Chile has the honour to transmit herewith Chile's voluntary pledges and commitments to the protection and promotion of all human rights (see annex), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251.



**Annex to the note verbale dated 15 February 2008 from the
Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretariat**

Aide-mémoire

The Republic of Chile has decided to put forward its candidacy for the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period 2008-2011, elections for which will be held in May 2008.

One of the basic pillars and objectives of Chile's foreign policy is human rights protection and promotion. This is attributable to our strong conviction regarding the worth and dignity of the human person and fundamental human rights and freedoms. It is also our response to our recent past, the main historical lesson of which is precisely the need for unconditional defence, everywhere and under all circumstances, of all fundamental rights and freedoms.

Nationally, the first step in the field of human rights following the return of democracy to Chile was the establishment in 1990 of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The main objective was to ascertain the truth of what happened during the military regime, identify the victims of human rights violations and their relatives, and grant the most appropriate means of compensation. The country made an unprecedented effort in this regard and continued to do so in subsequent years with the clear and firm purpose of seeking the truth and national reconciliation.

The way in which Chile approached the issue of human rights violations during the military regime has inspired a number of Latin American countries, which have viewed the Chilean model as an effective mechanism for confronting human rights violations under similar regimes and, at the same time, promoting the harmony and social peace essential to societies that have been torn apart by hatred, fanaticism, intolerance and violence.

Internally, too, Chile has given priority to respect for and observance of the human rights of minority groups and the weakest members of society, especially children, women, indigenous people, and all groups that are discriminated against in one way or another. Through a clear and resolute policy, Chile has emphasized recognition of cultural diversity as a right and a component of Chilean society in the twenty-first century.

This commitment to human rights protection and promotion is a national, cross-cutting commitment, based on a political and social consensus that has made it possible to place the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the forefront.

As a future member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Chile has made a commitment to advance these changes by pursuing legislative amendments designed to incorporate into its national laws the principal norms of international law that protect and promote human rights.

In the field of education, Chile will continue to implement courses on human rights. Most branches of the armed forces are currently teaching such courses as part of their mandatory training; the same applies to the rest of public education, in which the topic of human rights is addressed in citizen/civic training courses.

Internationally, Chile has participated in the principal human rights forums. It was a member of the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights, where it contributed to strengthening the universal human rights protection and promotion system, recognizing the special procedures system as one of the main tools for safeguarding those rights and underscoring the need to strengthen the procedures and enhance coordination among them to increase their effectiveness and avoid duplication of functions.

It should be recalled that the first special procedure to be established was in fact a working group on the situation of human rights in Chile that was formed in the 1970s. This working group ushered in the special procedures era and undoubtedly contributed at that time to raising the awareness of the international community about the human rights situation in Chile and warning of the grave violations committed by the Chilean military regime.

Chile has from the start urged the establishment of a Human Rights Council that contributes to respecting, promoting, and cooperating in all matters relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms and preventing their violation.

As a future member of the Council, Chile will continue to further all measures aimed at building a strong and effective body that emphasizes the search for consensus, transparency and equity in the treatment of issues, while always recognizing the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, including the right to development.

Chile has strongly promoted and supported standard-setting in various areas of human rights and has been involved in all negotiating processes aimed at establishing international instruments to improve human rights protection and promotion from a regulatory and legal perspective.

With respect to the competence of the international courts of human rights, Chile has, since 1990, recognized the compulsory jurisdiction and competence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Since that date it has cooperated substantially in strengthening the inter-American human rights protection and promotion system through voluntary financial contributions to the system and, in particular, through its firm determination to comply in a full and timely manner with the recommendations, judgements and decisions of both the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Lastly, the Republic of Chile has broad experience in promoting and protecting human rights, which emanates from its own conviction of the need to respect those rights as a guarantee of democratic stability, as well as the need to ensure that the dark events in our recent history involving human rights violations never recur in any part of the world.

Membership in the Human Rights Council will afford an opportunity for Chile to deepen its contribution to the universal human rights system, share its experience and help to strengthen the principle of respect for all human rights, which, alongside human development and security, are the foundations of an international system that places people at its centre.



General Assembly

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17 March 2008

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Sixty-second session

Agenda item 113 (d)

**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs
and other elections: election of fifteen members
of the Human Rights Council**

**Letter dated 28 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative
of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of
the General Assembly**

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of Argentina has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2008-2011 at the elections to be held next May.

Please find attached a copy of Argentina's voluntary pledges and commitments (see annex).

(Signed) **Jorge Argüello**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 28 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Pledges and commitments

Argentina has decided to present its candidacy to the Human Rights Council for the period 2008-2011. In the year of its creation, Argentina was elected to be a member of it, obtaining 158 votes out of 191, but as a consequence of the initial draw for renewing its members, it had to leave its seat after the first year. On that occasion, Argentina decided not to make a bid for a new mandate in order to guarantee the principle of regional rotation.

At an early stage, since the report of the High-Level Panel, which helped the Secretary-General in 2004 to advance in the organization reform, Argentina, together with a small number of other States, supported the creation of a Human Rights Council in order to raise the profile of human rights issues in the United Nations, which was reflected in Argentina's active participation in the negotiations in New York and Geneva, as well as in different events and consultations on the matter.

Since the restoration of the democratic system in 1983 and in light of its historical-political context of institutional interruptions and mass and systematic violations of human rights during state terrorism, Argentina has taken a position of principle to defend and promote human rights at a domestic level, and has thus been able to contribute to human rights progressive, conceptual and real development of international law.

The Argentine Republic has ratified almost all of the regional and international instruments on human rights in force. Several of them were granted constitutional rank as from the reform of the National Constitution in 1994. In this framework, the country has accepted the supervision of control organs established by the human rights treaties and, in this regard it has regularly been submitting the periodical reports required.

Argentina ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Argentina has signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which seeks the abolition of the death penalty. It has also ratified the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and examine communications, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Argentina has always cooperated with the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. In this regard, on 3 December 2002, the Argentine Government made an open and permanent invitation to the special thematic mechanisms of the Commission, stating that the representatives and experts of the

universal human rights system will always be allowed to enter our country when requested.

Argentina has tried to prevent a protection void and to this end, in the most recent sessions of the Human Rights Council, has supported the resolutions providing for renewal of special procedure mandates. It also supports and co-sponsors a large number of resolutions. The second ordinary session approved the decision on the "Right to the truth" submitted by Argentina.

Argentina considers that the United Nations action in the field of human rights should always be inclusive and should generate mechanisms of cooperation and consultation in order to improve the human rights situation in all countries. Therefore, it has always tried to play a moderating role with the other delegations and to maintain fluent relations with the representatives of non-governmental organizations. We are aware that a cooperative attitude will contribute to a normal and successful development of the undertakings of the organization's work to boost the promotion and protection of human rights.

In this context, Argentina is satisfied to be one of the first countries to be examined by the universal periodic review mechanism. Argentina supports this mechanism for it considers it an important tool to reduce the politicization of the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The experience of a recent past with systematic and general violations of human rights and of a present which has found the way to give a place to truth, remembrance, justice and reparation have served to shape Argentine policy on this matter as a policy of principles within the country and in international relations. In this framework, for the first time in the history of democracy in Argentina, the three powers of the state, representing a mature society and a tireless national human rights movement — which has been an example for the world — have decided to remove the obstacles in order to investigate and sanction those responsible for crimes against humanity, committed during state terrorism.

Finally, in this new stage of consolidation of the Human Rights Council, we wish to make a determined contribution in order to continue improving protection standards for all peoples around the world. In this regard, Argentina commits itself to:

- Support the special procedures and consolidate the new procedures and organs accountable to the Council, rationalizing the mechanisms, as long as this does not involve a protection void.
- Review practices against regulations, such as the motion on not taking steps on a certain draft resolution. It must be pointed out that many States resort to it and justify their action by arbitrarily interpreting rule 67 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, which is equivalent to rule 91 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. It is necessary for the Council members, in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, to be willing to talk about all issues relating to the promotion and protection of human rights.
- Actively participate in the Working Group in charge of drafting a Protocol to the International Convention of 1966 on economic, social and cultural rights, based on Argentina's understanding that all human rights are indivisible and interdependent and that there is no hierarchy between them.

- Promote dialogue between NGOs and the Human Rights Council.
- Cooperate in order to reach an efficient and effective implementation of the universal periodic review mechanism.

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Sixty-second session**Agenda item 113 (d)****Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council****Letter dated 4 March 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Slovak Republic has decided to present its candidature for the Human Rights Council for the term 2008-2011 at the elections to be held during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly in May 2008.

In this respect, please find attached herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Slovak Republic in the area of human rights, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

I request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 113 (d).

(Signed) Michal Mlynár
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 4 March 2008 from the Chargé
d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the
United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly**



Slovakia's voluntary pledges and commitments

The Slovak Republic is fully committed to the universal promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Since its establishment in 1993 the Slovak Republic has been a strong defender of compliance with the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the area of human rights, the equality of large and small nations, the implementation of international norms and standards arising from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents.

Human rights protection, both at the regional and global levels, is an essential component of Slovak foreign policy. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council in the period 2006-2007, the Slovak Republic was supporting the creation of the Human Rights Council in order to strengthen human rights protection mechanisms within the United Nations. Slovakia considers compliance with human rights, the principles of good governance and the rule of law essential for the prevention of open crises and conflicts.

The Slovak Republic has presented its candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2008-2011, with its main ambition being to play a positive and constructive role in the development and protection of human rights in the world. Slovakia was never a member of the former Commission on Human Rights and has not served in the current Council so far. Slovakia firmly believes that a fair rotation of Council members is crucial. If elected to the Council, Slovakia is determined to actively engage in its activities and contribute to the strengthening of the Council's position in the United Nations hierarchy.

General Assembly resolution 60/251 provides the Human Rights Council with the means necessary for the assessment of human rights issues and for decision-making. The Council should promptly respond to cases of gross and systematic violations of human rights and examine appropriate means of redress. Recommendations made by the Council should focus on searching for practical solutions and result in specific improvements to be carried out in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, international organizations and affected countries.

Bearing in mind that human rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, the Slovak Republic promotes the principle of equality of civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights, including the right to development. In this context the Slovak Republic pays special attention to the issues of social inclusion, the elimination of social and cultural prejudice and the promotion of racial and religious tolerance.

Stressing the importance of the conclusions of the Millennium Summit held in 2000 and the Millennium Development Goals, the Slovak Republic deems it necessary to pay due attention to the development of good governance, the rule of law and the protection of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, children, elderly people, the disabled and persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups.

The Slovak Republic is a party to nearly all international legal instruments in the area of human rights protection and humanitarian law. Under Article 7(5) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms prevail over Slovak laws and apply directly, as "self-executing treaties".

Slovakia is a party to the following six core United Nations human rights treaties and their optional protocols:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol
- Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols

Upon ratification of the aforementioned treaties, the Slovak Republic did not make any reservations to the accepted commitments. In September 2007 Slovakia signed the two new crucial international human rights instruments — the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including its Optional Protocol.

The Slovak Republic is a party to many other treaties on human rights and international humanitarian and criminal law, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, four Geneva Conventions and their three Additional Protocols and the relevant Council of Europe human rights treaties.

The Slovak Republic fully cooperates with the Council's special procedures, and was one of the first countries to extend a standing invitation for special procedures missions, as early as March 2001.

Emphasizing the importance of the international protection of human rights, the Slovak Republic hereby presents the following **voluntary pledges and commitments**. It will:

- Take an active part in activities and negotiations of the Council in order to promote the universal respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all
- Enhance genuine dialogue and cooperation among all Member States of the Council in order to achieve real progress in human rights protection on the ground
- Contribute to the consolidation of the new Council mechanisms, including the system of special procedures, the complaint procedure and the Advisory Committee

- Actively engage in the universal periodic review, which Slovakia would like to see developed as a cooperative and inclusive process whose results would include constructive recommendations for Member States, adopted on the principle of equal treatment and identifying areas where there is room for capacity-building and technical assistance
- Uphold the highest human rights standards and fully cooperate with the Council and its bodies, affirming the validity of its standing invitation to the special procedures mandate-holders
- Cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and support its activities
- Promote cooperation between the government sector and civil society, by making use of the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the Council's activities
- Advocate universal ratification of the United Nations human rights treaties and actively encourage third countries to become parties to the treaties if they have not yet done so
- Participate in the preparation of new international norms and instruments in the field of human rights, including improvements in the functioning of the existing mechanisms
- Cooperate with the United Nations treaty bodies and strive for a timely submission of national periodic reports concerning those treaties by which it is bound
- Complete, during its membership in the Council, the ratification process related to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Share its experience with the building of democratic structures and human rights institutions and transfer its know-how in this field to other transforming countries that so wish

The Slovak Republic has recently gone through profound changes related to the restoration of its democratic character and during this period has built a high-quality system of human rights protection at the national level. In connection with the establishment of a sovereign State in 1993, legal guarantees concerning the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms were securely embedded in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.

A broad legislative and institutional framework for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all citizens is currently in place in Slovakia. The Constitution of the Slovak Republic stipulates that all people in its territory are free and equal in their dignity and rights. The fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed in Slovakia to all individuals irrespective of their different status specified under the Constitution.

At the Government level, human rights issues fall within the competence of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Knowledge Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities. The Council of the Government for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups acts as an advisory body to the Government on national minority

policy issues and the implementation of international treaties. In order to establish an effective institutional framework to address the problems of the Roma minority, the position of Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities was created in 1999. At the parliamentary level, human rights issues are addressed by the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights, Nationalities and the Status of Women, which, among other things, reviews the compliance of draft legislation with constitutional provisions and international commitments.

By establishing an Ombudsman's office, with the title "Public Defender of Rights", Slovakia put in place an independent control mechanism to monitor human rights compliance. Already during its first five-year term, the Office of the Public Defender of Rights proved itself an effective instrument of non-judicial oversight of compliance with fundamental rights and freedoms of natural and legal persons with regard to actions, decisions or inaction by the authorities of public administration.

In 1993, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights was established, having the status of a national human rights institution within the United Nations. The Centre is competent, among other things, to provide legal assistance to victims of discrimination and intolerance; therefore it enjoys within the European Union the status of a specialized anti-discrimination institution, or so-called Equality Body.

With a view to strengthening the protection of human rights at the national level, the Slovak Republic hereby presents the following **voluntary pledges and commitments**. It will:

- Further develop its institutional framework and specific national policies focused on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, building on the existing expertise of Government bodies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders
- Continue implementing its Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in order to build a tolerant and democratic State, promote a multicultural society and prevent discrimination in all forms
- Strengthen the institutional and actual protection of the rights of children and women in society, including the preparation of specific programmes for this purpose
- Prepare a national action plan for children, in order to meet the recommendations made by the relevant United Nations treaty body
- Build effective mechanisms to prevent and suppress human trafficking and carry on with the tasks specified in the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings
- Increase the volume of its official development assistance provided to priority countries, including assistance through projects focused on the building of democratic institutions and the protection of human rights
- Inform the general public about activities undertaken by international bodies in the field of human rights and about their assessment of the human rights situation in the Slovak Republic (by publishing the results of the presentation of periodical reports before treaty bodies, etc.)

- Support activities of independent institutions, in particular the Public Defender of Rights and the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, and further target their activities in addressing concrete problems of our citizens, eliminating unequal treatment and discrimination, as well as educating the public about human rights issues